# A Family by Choice

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# A Family by Choice

by FujinoLover

Summary

Mary Sue Poots had new foster parents, shorty-Sam and gangly-Sam.

Notes

Happy birthday, dude. Love you ;)

Mary Sue Poots dragged her feet as she followed her social worker inside an apartment building in Manhattan. Her whole belongings fit in a duffel bag strapped across her shoulder. It was yet another foster home, another couple hoping to complete their family with the possibility of another kids (or not) and pets (dogs were the hardest to say goodbye at).

She had lost count after she was, with no apparent reason, taken back to St. Agnes from her sixth foster family. Since then she stopped caring—*hoping* all together. Potential adoptive parents wanted younger child, someone they could mold into the person who would loved them back. At sixteen, she was way beyond her expire date. The stays were mere vacations for her. Sometimes it was good, some other times it sucked, but she would still be out within a month.

Mary's case worker, Phil Coulson, turned to face her. His harmless smile was nowhere and a stern look was on its place instead. "Remember—"

"Behave. Don't break or steal anything." Mary rolled her eyes. "And call you immediately when something goes wrong," she added with a frown. The sting of a punch from an unpleasant stay pinched at her gut.

Coulson gave the last pat on her arm before they stepped out of the elevator car into the intended floor. The comfortable environment impressed neither of them. They knew how easy it was for monsters to hide behind the façade of wealth. Despite her already grim outlook in life, Mary couldn't help but fix her duffle strap and brace herself as Coulson rang the bell.

The door was opened not a minute later by a beautiful woman. For that split second, Mary's bisexuality conflicted her. It would be so wrong to have a crush on her new foster parent. So very wrong. To add on her dilemma, the woman sounded nice too.

"Mister Coulson," the woman greeted, smiling. "And this must be Miss Poots." She opened the door wider for them. "Come in. We've been waiting."

Coulson, noticing Mary's entranced dumb stare at the woman, nudged her forward. She gave him a sheepish grin. She was a growing teenager, she couldn't help it sometimes.

The apartment was in moderate size. Splashes of crimson and dark blue stood up against the monotone gray and white background. There were random items scattered or piled about. It was far from surgical tidiness but it wasn't a total chaos either. The clutters made the space felt more lived in instead.

The woman, now that Mary could see her full figure, was tall and lean. Even in her simple blouse and legging, she fit in the apartment's atmosphere. She had a pretty smile, too. Mary wondered if any second her husband—either old enough to be her father, or just as handsome and young so they could be dark-haired Barbie and Ken—would join them in the living room. She didn't expect another woman, who was just as hot, to show up.

Mary gave what she thought as a discreet glance at Coulson's direction and raised a brow. He gave her a knowing look. She had no problem with same-sex couple. It was at her own request that he stopped sharing about the foster homes she would live in. It should be some sort of surprise, pleasing or not. This one seemed to be the former than the latter.

Once the other woman came to stand beside her partner, Mary could see their glaring height difference. She didn't get to muse over it for long because Coulson had put his hands on her shoulders and pushed her forward to stand in front of him.

"Mrs. Shaw, this is Mary Sue Poots."

"Skye," Mary butted in, ignoring the warning squeeze on her shoulders. "My name is Skye."

First impression was everything. Most foster parents she had encountered were against this sort of rebellious behavior. It was way better than having inept adults trying to placate her by pinching her cheek or calling her cute as though she was a toddler.

The shorter woman had slight upwards tug on the corner of her lips. She was smirking, maybe, it was so minuscule Skye couldn't tell for sure. The taller one, however, smiled wider and offered a hand. Skye eyed it with a bit of disappointment. Like the coddling she hated, a formal handshake just showed the opposite but same awkwardness. So this couple was the kind of boring one. Still, Skye took it and gave a firm shake. She could be a boring adult too,

even though it was still two years before she legally became one and allowed to leave the hell-hole that was the foster system forever.

“We’re Sam.” The woman chuckled while her partner rolled her eyes at that. She took joy in their same nickname and it wouldn’t be the last time she did such introduction. “But you can call me Root, Skye.”

Skye had pleasant surprise spilling all over her face. She was quick to cover it with a grin. “Deal.”

Coulson gave an exasperated sigh, but smiled for the sake of appearances. He had met these women before and they had stellar records, even with their quirky personalities. He believed they would help Skye somehow, even if he had to help them patching the connection first as it was obvious they were not good at doing it on their own.

“This is Samantha Shaw.” Coulson motioned at the taller woman and then to her silent partner. “And her wife, Sameen Shaw.”

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The first dinner was a crucial one. It would determine how well feed Skye would be during her stay. She figured from her last time living with an upper-class family that she made a mess during mealtimes. The food they served was just too exotic. She couldn’t pronounce the names, let alone eating it with the ten different plates and silverwares placed on the table.

Too deep in her thought, she jolted up the bed—her own too big bed as there was no other child to share with, in her own too big room—when measured knocks came from the door. She smoothened the crease on the comforter and kicked her duffle bag under the bed as she stood up in alert.

“Skye?” said the voice behind the white door that Skye had identified as shorty-Sam’s. “Dinner’s ready.”

Then it was quiet. Skye had noticed the woman moving with silent steps, kind of like a cat or a trained operative. Unsure whether to answer it or not, she opened the door and peered through the gap, only to have herself jumped in surprise when she saw Sam standing unmoving in front of it. She raised a brow at Skye's intelligible exclaims.

From the direction of the kitchen, gangly-Sam—Root called out, "Sameen, stop creeping out the girl."

Sam had a smug smile on her face, even with Skye narrowing her eyes at her.

"Skye, come here. Dinner is ready," Root said.

Skye followed Sam into the dining room. She breathed out a sigh of relief when a delicious, but very common scent of grilled meat hit her nostrils. She was delighted to see plates of sizzling steaks served on the dining table. Her stomach rumbled. She put a hand over it to stop the embarrassing noise, but to no avail. Blushing, she avoided looking at her foster parents as she took a seat.

Despite her hunger, Skye opted to eat in considerable pace. She savored each bites while observing her new guardians. So Root could cook, really well, and Sam could eat a little *too* well. The thought of proper manner flew out of the window the moment Sam stabbed the unsuspecting steak and chomped a mouthful of it with each bite. Her attitude didn't affect Root at all. If anything, she seemed to think of it as cute, judging from the way she kept dabbing the corner of Sam's mouth with a napkin.

Minutes later, dinner was over. Skye had volunteered to wash the dishes. Sam helped her drying it while Root was scooping out ice cream into bowls by the counter near the fridge.

"You haven't unpacked."

Skye shrugged. She never did, it was a waste of effort. She didn't say so, though. It hadn't been a day yet and they had treated her well—like a person, an almost adult. She was at least grateful for that, even though she was sure her stay with them wouldn't last longer than a month.

“I used to have the same problem,” Sam said.

Skye handed her the last clean dish, raising a questioning brow when their eyes met.

“My dad was in the army,” Sam explained as she wiped the remnant water from the plate’s surface. “Moved a lot as a kid. It doesn’t worth unpacking until you get bored digging your stuff out of a bag every day.” She placed the plate down and then just walked away.

Skye stared at her with furrowed brows. She had expected a lengthy, heartfelt story that somehow would convey her that Sam understood where she came from and it ended with her unpacking her bag by the end of the night. Turned out it wasn’t the intention at all. Sam was letting her know she should decide for herself when she was ready.

She glanced over to where her foster parents were. Root was sticking out a spoonful of ice cream and Sam took it into her mouth. There were only two bowls on the counter. Skye tried not to look disappointed but then Root caught her eyes, pushed the other bowl forward and nodded at her with a smile. She failed on not grinning too wide as she dug in the cold treat.

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Skye was out of the place in a month. She didn’t do it on purpose this time. She didn’t get sent back to St. Agnes either. It was Tuesday afternoon when she came back from school and found the apartment trashed. There was no sign of forced entry. The door and the lock were intact and functioning when she arrived. The mess inside was as though a local storm had swept in and left wreckages in its wake.

“What happened?”

Skye got even more worried after noticing the shadow of a black eye forming on Root’s face. Now it wasn’t that odd to see on Sam, given her job as CIA field agent, but Root was a freelance hacker working for IFT. Or was she?

“We had a little…disagreement.”

If this was how a little disagreement turned out to be, Skye didn’t want to see a full-blown fight.

“Or more like someone lied about their job,” Shaw quipped from the kitchen. She brought a pack of frozen peas and handed it to Root, who hissed as she pressed it on her bluish eye.

“I didn’t lie, Sameen. I’ve had a few jobs.”

Shaw rolled her eyes. There were a couple of butterfly bandages on the cut on her cheek. Some strands of her dark locks jutted out of their ponytail. “Pack your bag,” she addressed Skye. “We’re going to stay across the hall while the landlord fixes this mess.”

Skye nodded. “Are you guys okay now?”

“Oh, don’t worry. We have worked out all the pent-up tension with the good old—”

In an instant, Skye covered her ears. She shook her head and hummed random tune that came into her mind. She glared at their smirks whilst walking into her room to stuff her belongings into her duffle bag. There was a good reason for their soundproofed bedroom and she was glad of not knowing the details.

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“No.”

Root pouted, but Skye didn’t budge.

“Why would you even do that?” Skye asked, incredulous. She felt trapped with Sam and Root staring at her. “I’m already seventeen!”

“Your age doesn’t matter,” Sam countered.

Skye clamped up at that. The year she spent under their care had been nothing short of amazing. For the first time she didn’t have to try and fit in, just like they didn’t either. Each of them existed as a separate person but somewhat functioned as a family with some friends on the side. She had met Sam’s partner, John Reese, and he was the first person to bring her into a shooting range and taught her how to shoot a gun. She also had met Root’s boss, Harold Finch, who showed her how to code. She was grateful that Root and Sam didn’t put big celebration on holidays—those times through the years she spent with her fellow orphans used to be celebrated too much in St. Agnes, but didn’t manage to dull down her longing to know her real family. She liked those two as her foster parents, but being adopted brought unknown insecurities forward.

“What’s the problem, Skye?” Root asked. “You don’t like us to be your parents? Coulson will still visit, I promise.”

“That’s the problem,” Skye snapped. “Other foster kids get their caseworker work between the foster parents and the bio parents. I don’t even know my real parents!” She stormed off to her room, slamming the door behind her.

It was two in the morning when Root came to her door. She didn’t knock. “Skye?” Her voice was muffled and tired.

Skye stopped playing with the shadow. Her hand suspended on the air as she waited. She hadn’t slept since she walked away earlier. She couldn’t. She never expected to be adopted. The money she saved from working part-time as a waitress in a nearby café was supposed to help her life once she was of age and out of the foster care system. She had planned on leaving, perhaps living in a van for a while. Sam and Root’s plan to adopt her had taken her by surprise. Now doubts, guilt, and fear crept into her mind, muddling her thought and future plans.

“May I come in?”

She couldn't say no when Root being her usual polite self like that, not after her rather harsh rejection of the adoption idea. So she kicked off the comforter and went to open the door. Root had a laptop with her, its screen beaming up her face from odd angle.

"I found something." Root had sat on the edge of the bed and Skye followed her example. The two of them sat side by side, staring at the multiple windows opened on the screen. "You were about one year old when you arrived at St. Agnes. The date you were left on their door is listed as your birth date in your birth certificate, right?"

Skye hummed.

"So I search for any deaths within the week."

"How can you be so sure my parents didn't just grow tired and dump me?"

Root made a face. "It was a possibility I'm glad I don't have to check through, because I found this." She showed Skye the screen. On it was a scanned local newspaper with a small section titled *Tragic Couple Died in a Fatal Car Accident*. The newspaper itself was dated just the day before Skye's arrival at St. Agnes. "I ran background check on them. Calvin and Jiaying Zabo had a baby girl listed to their names. She was born during their research stay in a small Chinese village a year before. Neither of them had any living relatives left, so I assume whoever found you had turned you into St. Agnes."

Root pulled up a scan of a baby girl's temporary birth certificate issued by the United State's embassy in China. It was even more blurry than the newspaper and it was never got transferred nor made into a permanent one. Skye couldn't help but trace the baby's name with her fingers.

"Daisy Johnson…" Her voice cracked. "I wasn't abandoned."

Root put the laptop away and placed a comforting hand on Skye's arm. "They didn't." She squeezed. "Do you want to talk about it?"

Skye shook her head, but when Root started to stand, she held her hand. “Can you stay? Just tonight?”

Root smiled. The bed was big enough to provide for the two of them to lie without touching each other. Skye was back playing with the light coming from the building across the street, twisting her hand into shapes. Beside her, Root was on her back, wide awake.

“Can I have those glow-in-the-dark stars on my ceiling?”

“Of course, sweetie.”

“Thank you…mom.”

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The stupid kids at school made fun of her name. Her first day as Daisy Johnson, the legal adoptive daughter of Samantha and Sameen Shaw, and she got detained in the principal office along with the two boys she had punched. She kept glaring at them from the side, pressing the cooling blue patch on her swollen knuckles while they were waiting for the parents to pick them up.

Daisy froze when she saw Sam and John walked down the hall towards her. She had expected Root to come. Root understood people in a scary psychological level and was an expert in smoothening down any trouble. On the other hand, Sam was more rigid on her approach. Daisy suspected she used her sidearm more than her words while trying to solve problem. The look she gave her was enough to make her gulp in fear. Sam and the boys’ parents went in to talk to the principal first before they all required to gather inside to discuss the problem and then doled out proper punishment.

“Are you alright?” John asked, having sat beside Daisy. “What happened?”

“They made fun of me.”

“And you punched them?”

Daisy nodded, guilty.

“It wasn’t like you.”

A long beat had passed before she quietly added, “They made fun of my moms too.”

John put his big hand over her head, making her looked up at him. He was smiling as he messed up her short hair a bit. “Shaw looks angry all the time.”

“I know.” She smiled back.

Daisy explained as best as she could when it was the students’ turn to join the parents inside, but in the end they all still got suspended for a week. The drive home was spent in silence. Once John was dropped off on his place, it became more uncomfortable. Daisy didn’t even bother to hide her frustration when they arrived. She stomped her feet, but said nothing. She shied away from Root’s questioning gaze and Sam answered it with a shrug.

Root flopped down on the couch beside Daisy. “Are you okay?”

Daisy had her arms crossed across her chest. “No,” she huffed.

“Get changed to something more comfortable,” Sam instructed then left, probably to get changed herself.

Daisy looked at Root with furrowed brows. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Shorts and tank top.” Root smiled like she knew something that Daisy didn’t. Most of the time, she truly did. “You might wanna hurry,” she urged.

Daisy rolled her eyes, a habit she had picked from Sam, and rushed to get changed in her room. As Root had suggested, she came out dressed in a black shorts and top. Sam already waited for her, hair tied in a tight ponytail. She waved for her to follow her to the room down the hall, the one across Root’s home office. Daisy never got inside because it was always locked. She had suspected it to be some sort of storeroom but she didn’t snoop around. So she was quite surprised to find an empty room with several workout equipments and the padded floor in the middle of it. It was a training room.

“If you want to knock someone out,” Sam began, throwing a roll of white gauze to Daisy. “Learn how to defend yourself first.”

Daisy caught the roll, staring at it in confusion until Root came up and took it from her. She started wrapping it around her hand in practiced ease as Sam did the same to her own hands. The week she got suspended from school, Sam trained her to fight without hurting herself in the process. Since then, Daisy started calling her by ‘mom’, much to her exaggerated annoyance and Root’s envy.

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“Under one condition.”

“Name it.”

Root took something out of the drawer, a small chip. “GPS tracker.”

Daisy made a face at it, looking for support from Sam. For someone who didn’t like being monitored, she didn’t raise a protest.

“And I should put it where?” Daisy eyed the chip with wary. Whatever her mothers had agreed upon, it must be something that was not good for her somehow.

“Sameen can embed it on your skull.”

“What the hell!”

“Language, sweetie,” Root reprimanded. “We need to know where you are and that you’re okay.”

“I’m going to Europe! For a vacation!”

“Daisy Johnson.” Sam’s stern warning left no room to argue.

In the end, they made a compromise. It took Daisy days to stop scratching at her inner arm but it worth the all-paid expense tour around Europe. It had taken her two extra years to finish high school. She was left behind due to her messed up time moving from one foster home to another. She was almost twenty when she received her diploma, but she would be a student at MIT by next year and her parents had been so proud they let her go on a vacation, *alone*. She suspected it had a lot to do with Harold, who was also a proud MIT graduate, and his insistence of culture appreciation, but she didn’t look a gift-horse in the mouth.

England was her first destination. Her online best friend, Felix Dawkins, lived in London. He had been gushing about her visit for weeks. Even his foster sister, Sarah Manning, who wasn’t be involved much in their chats as she was busy taking care of her young daughter, promised to show Daisy around. The three of them made up the three musketeers of ex-foster kids as they roamed about the city for two days straight.

She wandered around the streets by herself on the third day. Felix was having lunch in his flat with his boyfriend and she didn’t want to intrude more than she already did. She walked around without aim, taking intersection after intersection until she reached the river. She had just pocketed her phone back after sending some pictures to Root when someone caught her attention.

A young woman with short, dark blonde hair was speeding down the road on a bicycle. The wind swept over her hair and as cliché as it would sound, Daisy was entranced. Their eyes met. She smiled, the woman smiled back. Neither of them realized she was riding right at Daisy's direction until it was too late and they crashed.

When Daisy gained her consciousness, it was to an accented female voice she never heard before.

"Miss Johnson?"

Daisy blinked, taking in her surroundings. She was lying on a bed, not in her room in New York City. The woman hovering above her had a mass of curly blonde hair and a white coat on. Not her mothers for sure. Then the memory of her standing on the sidewalk and staring at the young woman on the bicycle and being ran over by said bicycle and the pain all over her body were making themselves known. She moaned.

"Miss Johnson, can you hear me?"

Daisy nodded, moaning some more.

"I'm doctor Cormier."

Daisy nodded again, with less motion than the first. Her eyes still closed shut. Her head was pounding and her body was aching everywhere. She was probably in an ER, under the care of a very French and very pretty doctor. Doctor Cormier chuckled. In her state of newly gained consciousness, Daisy was unaware that she had said her thought out loud. She groaned and tried to hide her blush with a hand, only to groan some more but in pain. She became aware of the dressing covering her elbow.

"Can you tell me what day is today?"

“Bad luck Friday.”

Doctor Cormier smiled in amusement. “Can you tell me what happened?”

“A cute girl ran me over with her bicycle.”

“This cute girl?” Doctor Cormier stepped aside, uncovering the young woman who had indeed hit her. She had cut on the side of her forehead and waved at Daisy. “You have concussion. We’ve to keep you here overnight. Doctor Simmons here”—she motioned at the other woman and Daisy noted the same blue scrubs they were wearing—“will observe you through your stay.”

“*Doctor* Simmons? Is it safe?” Daisy joked. She didn’t mind having a cute doctor slash assailant to keep an eye on her, but she shouldn’t stay in the hospital any longer. “Look, doctors, I’m fine. Really. I promise I’ll be here for check-up first thing tomorrow, but I can’t stay overnight.”

“We can’t allow that, Daisy. It’s for your—”

Someone had joined them; the blue curtain surrounding Daisy’s bed was ruffled. With doctor Cormier standing in her line of sight, Daisy couldn’t tell who it was but she did see Doctor Simmons stepped aside to intercept the intruder.

“Excuse me ma’am, you’re not allowed—”

“Agent Margaret Carter,” the dark haired woman said, whipping out her credential and shutting the young doctor in the process. “Interpol.”

At that doctor Cormier had to turn to face the agent and Daisy groaned again. “Hi, Aunt Peggy…” she greeted, giving her a sheepish grin.

Peggy remained nonplussed as she ran her eyes all over Daisy, assessing her injuries and calculating the time she needed to recover. They were close. Sam and Peggy became friends after a joined mission way back. Peggy had visited them several times in New York, even more since she came to harbor a certain fondness for an aspiring Broadway actress who was a senior waitress in the café Daisy worked at. Daisy had promised to stay on Peggy's tonight, but her whole vacation schedule seemed to be ruined already.

"Do you mind, doctors?"

Daisy gave an assuring smile to Doctor Simmons when she lingered a bit too long, worry etched on her face.

"Your parents are worried about you," Peggy said once the doctors had left.

"I'm fine, it's just a small accident. My phone got smashed. Let me just call—"

"They're on the flight here."

Daisy whined.

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Peggy had stayed through the day. No one dared to question her constant presence in the room Daisy had transferred to. Felix, Sarah, and Kira had visited but the nurse ushered them out in less than half an hour. Other than that, it was only Daisy and Peggy watching boring shows on TV. It was during dinner time, when Doctor Simmons brought Daisy's meal, that Peggy left the room for longer than ten minutes. She was getting her own dinner in the cafeteria, she had said, but Daisy saw the conspirational wink she gave her before she left.

"I'm so sorry about what happened earlier," Doctor Simmons said as she set the tray in front of Daisy.

“It’s okay. It was an accident.” Daisy stared down at the questionable cream substance in the bowl that could be cream soup or porridge or oats and decided that her doctor was far more interesting than the meal. She glanced at the cut on Doctor Simmons’ forehead. “Are you hurt too?”

“Just some scraps on my knees.” She tapped at her temple. “And this. You weren’t as lucky.” She nodded at the bandage wrapped around Daisy’s ankle. It was sprained during the crash.

Daisy took it in strides. “I’ve had worse.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Stop apologizing.”

Still, Doctor Simmons offered a guilty smile. She dug in her pocket and much to Daisy’s amusement, smuggled out an extra cup of pudding. Daisy chuckled at her antics, but her face soon fell as Doctor Simmons urged her to eat the dubious substance (that turned out to be bland porridge).

They talked through it, making swallowing the food less of a hard work for Daisy. Doctor Simmons became just Jemma, a newly graduated doctor taking residence under doctor Cormier because like her, she wanted to take PhD as well. A doctor doctor. Daisy tried not to swoon too hard. She was lucky Jemma was oblivious to her fawning.

“I’m sorry I’ve talked a lot about myself.”

Daisy had wanted shook her head in negative, but she minded her concussion. “I like hearing you talk,” she blurted out, provoking slight dust of pink on their cheeks. She busied herself with the second cup of pudding to hide her embarrassment and then realized how much time had passed. Peggy hadn’t come back yet, though she suspected her lounging on the hallway outside. “Are you not in a shift or something?”

“Doctor Cormier let me have the night off.”

“Shouldn’t you be resting?”

“I want to check on you.”

“An extra pudding doesn’t absolve my pain, Doctor Simmons,” Daisy teased, pointing her plastic spoon at Jemma. “It’ll require more than that.”

Jemma had known Daisy long enough to tell that she was joking, although she did still feel the pang of guilt whenever her eyes caught one of the bandages on Daisy’s body. “I thought so too,” she said. She wrung her hands together on top of her lap and bit her lip. It was a while before she dared to see Daisy on the eye again. A cocked brow greeted her and she returned it with a nervous smile. “I was kind of hoping...that you would be up for dinner?” Then she added, “Once you’ve recovered of course.”

“It’s a date?”

A timid nod answered her. Daisy was grinning so wide her cheeks hurt. It didn’t last for long, though. The door being slammed open, interrupting their moment. It was Sam and Root, their expressions dark. Daisy had to grasp Jemma’s hand to stop her from trying to shoo the two women out of the room. It was ten, way beyond visitation hours, but nothing could stop them anyway.

“How about we delay that date... Maybe do everything in reverse.” At Jemma’s cute confused face aiming at her, Daisy added, “I’d like you to meet my parents first?” She squeezed at her hand, hoping to be as supportive as she could because she knew how intimidating her parents could be.

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